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GEORGE HITCHCOCK



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GEORGE HITCHCOCK

# GEORGE HITCHCOCK

By

CHRISTIAN BRINTON

Author of "Modern Artists," etc.

It should scarcely be necessary to recall the outward facts of George Hitchcock's career. The general public is presumably aware that he was born in 1850, at Providence, Rhode Island, and died in Holland, 1913. That he was famous as a college athlete at Brown University and Harvard, and subsequently practised law with desultory distinction are details which count for little in comparison with a life-long devotion to his profession in a single, quaint corner of the globe. In the annals of American art the name Hitchcock is inseparably associated with Holland. It was to the land of polders and dykes, of canals and tulip fields that the young man migrated as a mere aspiring amateur, and it was there that he remained to win world-wide recognition. He actually could not paint outside of Holland. Dutch life and scene were ever the most congenial source of his inspiration and activity.

Merely to characterize Mr. Hitchcock as a painter of sunlight, as has not infrequently been the case, is hardly adequate. In point of fact he was one of the pioneers of the modern outdoor movement. As far back as 1880 he began to confront nature with frank, unprejudiced eye and to scatter forth into the world canvases that vibrated with

freshness and clarity of vision. Although his debut synchronized with the advent of Impressionism, George Hitchcock owed little to the meticulous analysis of chromatic values which constitutes the particular achievement of Monet and his followers. It was rather through his admiration for Mesdag and the leading Dutch masters of water-colour that the American arrived at that fluent translucency of effect which remains his chief contribution to contemporary painting. One of the earliest to turn his back upon the sterility of academic training and the murky tonality of gallery and museum, he went blithely into the open and became an eloquent exponent of sunshine, colour and atmosphere.

Though virtually self-taught, George Hitchcock soon tasted the fruits of success. "La Culture des Tulipes," which was signaled for special praise at the Salon of 1887, proved but the prologue to a series of kindred subjects all celebrating the radiant vesture of Holland in springtime. He painted mainly at noon, when the sun was highest and brightest, and his work spontaneously became a song of praise to outward beauty. Landscape was usually combined on fairly even terms with the figure, and while in no specific sense an interpreter of character, he seldom failed to give costume and the picturesque accessories of native dress due prominence in each pictorial scheme. It was in the vicinity of Egmond, and later at Veere, in South Holland, that most of his work was done. He used to enjoy brief trips to London, Paris or the States, yet the coming of spring always found him back in Holland among his beloved tulip beds or



sketching along the dunes with the wind drifting in from the sea.

Following his initial triumph Mr. Hitchcock exhibited regularly in the principal Continental capitals as well as in his own country. He was *Hors concours* in Paris by 1887, and was subsequently awarded medals in Paris, Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Vienna and elsewhere. Few native-born artists have enjoyed an ampler measure of popularity or achieved greater distinction. He was a member of the Munich Secession, and the only American member of the Vienna Academy, besides being an Officer of the Order of Franz Josef.

Viewed in retrospect, the aesthetic legacy of George Hitchcock presents an appealing fusion of taste and sensibility. Local, yet cosmopolitan, its dominant note is one of refined lyricism. The rambling, spacious house at Egmond which was his home during so many fruitful years was called, after the Dutch fashion, Schuilenburg—"Shelter and Protection"—and there is in all he left behind a feeling of joyous serenity. His work will live because he succeeded in the difficult task of creating beauty out of the simplest natural elements—sunshine, flowers, healthy forms, and happy faces.

# Catalogue of Paintings

- 1   Asters
- 2   Twilight
- 3   Double White Tulips
- 4   Sun-Flecked
- 5   November
- 6   Purple Hyacinths
- 7   Flower Field near Leiden
- 8   Pink Hyacinths
- 9   Spring Sunlight (Lent by Miss Anne Duane,  
      New York)
- 10   Pink Tulips
- 11   Apple Blossoms
- 12   Children at Play, Marken
- 13   The White Mill
- 14   Alms-Houses, Leiden
- 15   Full Moon
- 16   Noordwyke
- 17   White Mill, Egmond-aan-Zee
- 18   The Artist's House, Holland
- 19   The Patchwork Quilt
- 20   Spring Moonlight
- 21   Red Roofs
- 22   Wet Road
- 23   Windmill in the Dunes
- 24   April Weather
- 25   In the Orchard
- 26   Marken Peasant Girl
- 27   Sunday in Zeeland
- 28   Island of Marken (Unfinished painting)

- 29 Tea-Time, Marken
- 30 Milking Time
- 31 The Poppy Field
- 32 Hay Makers, Zeeland
- 33 Milkmaids, Early Morning
- 34 Flower Seller
- 35 The Windmill Land
- 36 Vespers
- 37 The Turf Stove, Zeeland
- 38 In the Dunes
- 39 Dunes near Laren
- 40 Scrub Oaks
- 41 Oranges, Riviera
- 42 Ste. Genevieve, Patron Saint of Paris
- 43 The Return of Persephone
- 44 The Flight into Egypt
- 45 Hagar and Ishmael
- 46 The Annunciation
- 47 The Burgomaster's Daughter
- 48 Tulips "George Hitchcock"
- 49 Eastertide





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